Interpretation and Uses of Medical Statistics, Third edition, Geoffrey J. Bourke, Leslie E. Daly and James McGilvray. Pp. xiii + 330, illustrated. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford, London, Edinburgh, Boston, Palo Alto, Melbourne, 1985. £16.50.

There are now many books which seek to introduce basic concepts of statistics, and their application to medicine, to readers who have had no formal training in statistical theory or methods. This book has particular merit, witnessed by its reappearance here in a third edition. It is likely to appeal to a general readership through its breadth, humanity and good humour.

The problem faced by all such texts is that authors feel constrained to stop short of detailed description of important and widely used methods, such as analysis of variance and covariance, believing, probably quite correctly, that these will not be understood by most of the intended general, non-mathematical audience. However, there is concern that, with advanced computing tools so widely available, such an audience will inevitably encounter and have to try to interpret such methods.

The text here achieves clarity of advice without avoiding difficult issues. There is a useful set of Appendices—particularly Appendix C which summarises the commonly encountered statistical tests in terms of the situations in which they are applicable, the assumptions underlying their use, the hypotheses tested and the actual methods employed. The treatment is also very practical—a good example is the discussion of risk and the relationship of experimental design to the types of questions which can be answered.

Chapter 12 on computing is not up to the standard of the rest of the book—it is perhaps slightly misplaced given the stated objectives, as the topics introduced spread far beyond medical statistics. However, overall, it is an excellent and readable book covering a difficult area.

D. Ingram
*Department of Medicine,
St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College,
London EC1A 7BE.*

The Kidney: an Outline of Normal and Abnormal Function, Fifth edition, H.E. de Wardener. Pp. x + 604, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1985. £25.00.

It is a pleasure to welcome this new edition of 'The Kidney', which retains as the benefits of single authorship, a minimum of duplication and a maximum of cross referencing as well as a consistent lucid style. As Professor de Wardener points out, the book reflects his own research interests. There are major authoritative contributions on renal and electrolyte physiology, mechanisms of disease, sodium homeostasis and blood pressure control, urinary infections and calcium metabolism in renal failure. There are new chapters on hormones and the kidney and on disturbances of water metabolism and a majority of those retained have been extensively re-written. I was impressed particularly by the chapters on chronic renal failure, tubular disorders, immunological diseases of the kidney and diabetes mellitus. I think the book suffers somewhat from having no section devoted to

urolithiasis which is such an important aspect of nephrological as well as urological practice. The chapters on porphyria, scleroderma and radiation nephritis which seem to be hangovers from earlier editions could be left out in any future edition to make room. The fifth edition of *The Kidney* can be warmly recommended to all students of nephrology, and not least to those with the MRCP part I examination on their minds.

B.I. Hoffbrand
*Whittington Hospital,
London N19 5NF.*

Operations in Urology, Philip Clark. Pp. vii + 446, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1985. £35.00.

There have been several books on operative urology published in recent years and I wondered how there could be a place for yet another. However, Mr Clark's book is different, being aimed specifically at the urological trainee and giving considerably more practical detail about the procedures than is customary. There are excellent chapters on the basic procedures in urology such as catheterisation and cystoscopy with potential difficulties and disasters highlighted together with hints on how to avoid these situations.

This is an individual book and reflects Mr Clark's personal practice with the strength and weaknesses of such an approach. For instance, most urologists practice more than one type of pyeloplasty depending on the anatomy encountered. Mr Clark describes only one (the Anderson Hynes) but illustrates this overlavishly for I counted over 30 illustrations of this one procedure.

The book is illustrated in clear well-produced line drawings (not so good for X-rays) and the references are up to date and helpful.

One could say that a book published in 1985 should contain more than a passing reference to ureteroscopy, percutaneous nephrolithotomy and the extra-corporeal shock wave lithotripter, but perhaps progress in these fields is moving so rapidly that they are more suitable for specialist monographs. Also abdominal lymph node dissection for testicular tumours is sufficiently frequently practiced in the UK to warrant more than a brief mention.

Despite these criticisms I enjoyed reading the book and I think every practicing urologist would learn something from it. I would recommend it without hesitation to any surgical trainee coming into contact with urology for the first time, for I know of no other book so full of practical advice and instruction. At £35 it is a lot of book for the money!

J.C. Smith
*Department of Urology,
Churchill Hospital, Oxford.*